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CHOPS,
AN ETHIOPIAN FARCE,
IN ONE ACT,

BY G. SHACKELL.

PRINTED FROM THE AUTHOR'S ORIGINAL
MANUSCRIPT.

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—CLYDE, OHIO:—
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CHOPS.

CHARACTERS.

Frederick Johnson, - - - - - *A young Doctor.*
Mr. Cornwell, - - - - - *A visitor from the country.*
Chops. - - - - - *A negro servant.*

COSTUMES.

Johnson—*A business suit.*
Cornwell—*Shabby-genteel.*
Chops—*Extravagant waiter's dress, high collar.*

SCENE—A PLAIN ROOM.

TMP 96-000742

TIME OF PLAYING—TWENTY-FIVE MINUTES.

STAGE DIRECTIONS.

R., means Right; L., Left; R. H., Right Hand; L. H., Left Hand; C., Centre; S. E. [2d E.,] Second Entrance; U. E., Upper Entrance; M. D., Middle Door; F., the Flat; D. F., Door in Flat; R. c., Right of Centre; L. c., Left of Centre.

R.

R. C.

C.

L. C.

L.

* * * The reader is supposed to be upon the Stage, facing the audience.

CHOPS,



SCENE.—*Dining room. Table c. with two chairs, a small table r. for CHOPS.*

JOHNSON discovered standing with a note in his hand.

Johnson. This is very annoying, we have just had dinner, and in comes our old friend Cornwell to make a visit. Hungry as a bear, no doubt, and I guess there is not much left in the larder, and to make it worse I have received a summons from one of my patients to come at once, and perhaps will not be back for a couple of hours. I shall be obliged to leave friend Cornwell in Chops' care, and Chops although a splendid servant, is always up to some trick, and I am afraid he will be trying some of them upon my visitor before I return. Mr. Cornwell is a peculiar old gentleman, and I would not have him abused for the world. However, I must caution Chops, and also see what there is for my friends lunch. (*calls Chops*) Chops!

Enter CHOPS slowly, r. u. e. a paper in his hand which he is reading.

Chops. Abeum Lincum say he's a gwine to
Free all de niggers in de war,
Old massa Johnson say he's a mind to
See how Abeum do dat da.

He runs against FREDERICK as he finishes. Starts when he sees him.

Chops. Dat you massa? didn't know you was here?

Frederick. (sharply) Didn't know I was here? didn't you hear me call you?

Chops. Di—did you call me massa?

Fred. Yes I did. Where did you get that verse you were reading?

Chops. Dis verse? Yes, dat's one of mine. You didn't know I was a contributor, did you?

Fred. You a contributor?

Chops. Oh, yes massa, I can make more at dat dan working out; so I's going to leave you next week.

Fred. Going to leave?

Chops. Yes gwine to leave. I's tired of working for three dollars a week.

Fred. Don't it find you too?

Chops. Guess you does find me, but I haven't found de three dollars yet. I's made an engagement to contribute for de "New York Bomb Shell." I do all de heavies, and throw all de big political bombs. Won't make big pay right away till I get used to it; but after dat, why I just rake in de money. Just started last week. Course can't expect to make much on de start, but I'll get more after awhile.

Fred. Well, Sam, sorry you are going to leave, and hope you will do well, and if you want to come back to work for me, why all right. (*aside*) He will be back in a week. Say, Chops, I have an old friend come in, and you must get him a lunch. He has come a long way, and must be hungry. I am called away, and shall not be back for some time. I want you to be polite to Mr. Cornwell, treat him nicely, and be sure you don't get up to any of your tricks. What can you give him for a lunch?

Chops. Don't know, massa, we's done got away wid about eberything 'ceptin' de chicken you—you brought for to-morrow.

Fred. Ah, that will do, give Mr. Cornwell some choice bits of that, some wine, and anything else you can find. Now get lunch ready at once, and mind what I told you.

(exit CHOPS, R. FRED looking, L.) Here comes Cornwell now.

Enter CORNWELL, L. they shake hands.

Fred. Mr. Cornwell, I am sorry to say I am called away to see a patient, and will be obliged to leave you in care of my servant, Chops. He will get you a lunch at once, and I hope you will get along all right till I return.

Corn. Well, Frederick, I am sorry you must go, but you needn't be at all anxious about me; Chops and I will get along all right. (*aside*) I hope that nigger will hurry up the lunch, I am hungry as a wolf.

Fred. Come in here, Mr. Cornwell, and I will show you something to amuse yourself with till Chops gets lunch ready.

Corn. All right, Frederick, I am coming. (*looking back wistfully at table*) Gewhilekers my stomach!

(exit L. U. E.)

Enter CHOPS, R. U. E., bringing tray with small cooked chicken, bony and very much over done. Large knife, hatchet, also bottle of wine and two glasses. Places bottles and glasses on table c., tray and chicken on side table as he comes in.

Chops. Canary birds on toast. Well, dat am de toughest chicken I eber seed. Broke three carvin' knives trying to get thro his hide. Guess massa bought him at a bankrupt sale. I cooked him about ten hours, and he ain't showed no signs of gettin' tender yet. (*goes over to table, c., pours out wine, and drinks*) Oh, goodness, dat's lovely! Massa don't let me hab any of dat very often. Now if dat old hayseed hadn't come, I'd agone fishing wid another coon, and he had a bottle about dat long wid him. Yum, yum! Den massa he wouldn't let me go, cause he had company come. By golly, I'll get eben wid old hay seed for dat. Gee, I'll hab more fun wid him dan a circus. (*goes to side table picks up the chicken by leg*) A few choice bites! By golly, dar aint been no choice bites on dis ar fowl since Noah's Ark lit on Bunker's Hill! Dat's a rooster ebry time. He's been roostin' around so long, he's got humpbacked. Dis must

hab been de chicken dat scratched up all Cain's clover seed
in de garden of Eden. Ya, ya! He's a daisy, he is.

(slaps it down on table.)

Enter CORNWELL, L. U. E.

Corn. Say, Chops, haven't you got that ar lunch ready yet?

(CHOPS looks at him, turns around and laughs to himself.)

Chops. (aside) Oh, look at de old sardine!

He continues to laugh. CORNWELL comes over and slaps him on back; CHOPS starts.

Corn. What are you laughing at, you white-washed angel?

Chops. I wasn't lafin'.

Corn. Yes, you was.

Chops. No, honest I wasn't.

Corn. I tell you I know you was.

Chops. Den I must hab been lafin'.

Corn. Of course you was, you can't fool me.

Chops. Dat's all right, who said I wasn't?

Corn. You did. Now see here, have you got that lunch ready!

Chops. Say, massa, what's your name?

Corn. My name is Cornwell. Drove in thirteen miles this mornin', and I am about cavin' for something to eat. What have you got for lunch?

Chops. Got some bery tender chicken here, I'll give you a few choice pieces ob dat, and a bottle of elegant wine, dat's all I can scrape up.

Corn. Well, hurry up and cut that chicken, I'm starved.

Chop. Well, say, massa Carnstock——

Corn. Cornwell I told you.

Chops. Yes, dat's what I said, Cornfield. Say, massa Corncrib, if you just sit down here and look ober de paper, I'll hab de chicken ready in a minute. *(hands paper)* Dat's de last paper.

Corn. *(takes paper, sits at c. table facing the audience)* This ain't the last paper, it's a week old.

Chops. Oh, no, massa, dat am de last; got it outen de post office dis mornin'.

Corn. I tell you its a week old; look at the date. July 16th., that's last week.

Chops. Oh, you can't tell nuffin' by dat, dey just forgot to change de date, dat's all.

Corn. Well, hurry up with that chicken.

Chops. Yes, massa. (*goes back of CORNWELL's chair examines attentively his bald head*) By golly! what a skating rink dat would make. Looks like a Minnesota farm after de grasshoppers had make a call.

Corn. (*sees him and turns quickly*) What are you doing there?

(*as he speaks, CHOPS points to a piece in paper and reads.*

Chops. Horrible slaughter! Three persons burnt up by a cyclone.

Corn. (*angry*) Will you bring that chicken?

Chops. Yes, massa, you shall hab it at once.

CORNWELL pours wine in glass sets on table. CHOPS starts for side table, but sees wine, and as CORNWELL turns to paper, CHOPS drinks wine, then goes to chicken, chops off one leg with hatchet. Next sharpens knife on floor, and succeeds in cutting off several pieces of skin and bones—exerts himself very much. CORNWELL turns, takes glass, carries it to mouth, is astonished to find wine gone. Looks at glass, then at CHOPS; seeing CHOPS at work, pours more wine, holding it in his hand after tasting it. CHOPS takes large straw, goes up behind him and drinks wine through straw, then brings plate with what chicken he has cut, and places before CORNWELL. CORNWELL turns, carries glass to mouth, and is very much astonished to find it empty, but sets glass down and turns his attention to plate.

Chops. Dar, massa, dar's some to begin on. I'll hab some more directly.

CORNWELL devours chicken ravenously; finally chokes very badly; gets red in face. CHOPS runs to his assistance, goes behind chair, pulls his head back, succeeds in pulling a large piece of skin from his mouth.

Corn. (*recovering—to CHOPS, angrily*) Say, bring me something I can eat, not a lot of skin and bones; hurry up now.

Chops. Yes, massa, you shall hab some in a second. (*aside*) By golly, old Cornfield had it bad dat time; I tought Gaberal called him sure.

Exit and returns with hand saw, cuts chicken in two, takes both pieces to table, also takes bottle like first marked "poison," throws one half of chicken upon CORNWELL's plate, sits in chair at side of table, and begins to chew at the other half; helps him self to wine from bottle on table.

Corn. (*sees him*) Say, drop that wine, you—

Chops. Dot's just what I'm doing, massa.

Corn. I mean give me that bottle!

Chops. Oh, dat's different!

Changes bottles, gives CORNWELL poison bottle. CORNWELL takes a swallow or two, spits it on the floor, takes up bottle, sees label and is horrified; turns to Chops and finds him drinking from the other bottle, gets excited.

Corn. Say, Chops, was there poison in this bottle?

CHOPS takes no notice; continues drinking. CORNWELL gets more excited, bangs Chops on the head, and repeats question. Chops jumps.

Chops. Yes!

Corn. Well, I drank some of it. I'm poisoned!

Chops. Guess you are. (*drinks.*)

Corn. (*pleadingly*) Chops, do you mean that? will it kill me?

Chops. Sure thing. If you drank half a drop of dat stuff, it will kill you deader dan dat rooster.

Corn. Oh, what shall I do? Oh, Chops, what did you give me that stuff for?

Chops. I didn't do nufin', what are you talking about?

Corn. You gave me the bottle.

Chops. No I didn't, massa Pop corn, I just had de bottle in my hand; was going down cellar to kill some rats,

and you took de bottle and drank it. But you needn't make so much fuss about it, you might as well die now as any time. You got to die some time.

Corn. Oh, Chops, go and get Frederick; may be he can give me something!

Chops. (*drinking*) Habn't got time massa. You needn't be alarmed, you'll die all right.

Corn. But I don't want to die; I ain't ready to die.

Chops. Well, you better get ready den; you better say your prayers, and go and lie down dar somewhere, and die decent. Don't make so much noise about it; you interrupts my reflections. (*drinks*.)

Corn. Chops, h-how long does it take to-to kill a person?

Chops. Well, 'cordin' to de way it lays out de rats I should think dat you would last for as much as ten minutes yet.

Corn, (*beside himself*) Ten minutes! Oh, dear! Oh, dear! (*bows head on table and moans loudly, then suddenly jumps up, rushes out L. U. E., and brings up against FRED. who is coming in, both fall on stage—CHOPS roars with laughter.*)

Fred. (*getting up*) What's this! What's the matter? (*CHOPS sneaks off r. laughing.*)

Corn. Oh, I'm poisoned, I'm poisoned! Give me something, quick!

Fred. (*calls*) Chops! Chops!

Enter, CHOPS, r., running, looking very innocent.

Chops. Yes, massa, what you want?

Fred. Come and help me lift him to a chair, he says he is poisoned, then run and get me some mustard and warm water. Now quick! (*they lift him to chair, exit CHOPS r., running—CORNWELL acts very sick*) What is it, where did you get the poison?

Corn. (*feebley*) I drank it out of a bottle, thought it was wine.

Enter, CHOPS r., with large dish and spoon, gives to FRED,

FRED gives CORNWELL several spoonsfull—CHOPS trying to assist, laughing—medicine makes CORNWELL worse.

Fred. You must vomit, or you will die. How do you feel?

Corn. (*very sick*) I feel as though I wanted to die.

Chops. Oh, you will die all right.

Fred. You keep still!

Corn. It's all Chop's fault, he gave it to me.

Chops. Didn't do no such thing, didn't know nuffin 'bout it.

Fred. Where is that bottle? (*looks around—sees bottle*) Is this it?

Corn. Yes, that's it. Chops gave it to me.

Chops. No, honest, massa Frederick, I didn't know nuffin 'bout it. Guess massa Corncrib has got de snakes, he had a terrible pile of wine.

Fred. Why, this is not poison, it is only salt and water. (*angry*) Chops, this is one of your tricks, you shall catch it this time.

FRED starts for CHOPS, CORNWELL suddenly recovers, grabs up broom and also rushes for him, they chase him round stage, CORNWELL at CHOP's heels, using broom on his head, CHOPS shouting. FREDERICK following CORNWELL, CHOPS suddenly stops, stoops down and CORNWELL goes over him falling on stage, FREDERICK stumbles and falls over him—CHOPS stands near laughing.

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PETE.....	<i>A colored servant.</i>
MRS. DAY.....	<i>Wife of Day.</i>
DORA DAY [ten years of age].	<i>Daughter of Day.</i>

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OSCAR DURAND.....	<i>"A young Gentle."</i>
JABEZ BLIGH.....	<i>A friend to Day.</i>
BARNABAS GRUMP.....	<i>A Yankee.</i>
PETE.....	<i>A colored servant.</i>
MRS. DAY.....	<i>Wife of Day.</i>
DORA DAY [eighteen years old]	<i>Daughter of Day.</i>
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SYNOPSIS OF INCIDENTS.

ACT I.

Home of Farmer Dalton. "Don't talk politics." The dinner hour. News from Fort Sumter, and call for 75,000 men. Quarrel of old friends. "They hung traitors in former times." Oath of vengeance. The patriotic Dutchman. His wonderful story. Husband and wife. "Go, and may God bless you." Little Willie. "Dot dog. The Dutchman organizes a company. Parting of lovers, and "parting forever." "Country first and love afterwards." Schneider, the Dutchman, and his new company. He means business and shows his "boys" that he understands military business. Enlisting. Schneider and his company sign the rolls. The Daltons. "Husband must you go?" Duty. Little Willie. "Please mother, may I go?" Presentation of the flag. Parting of loved ones.

ACT II.

Camp by night. The letter from home. Army duties. Songs and merriment. Tenting on the old camp ground. Inspection of the regiment. General's McPherson and Sherman. News from Atlanta. A brave man required. The dangerous mission. Promise of promotion given by McPherson. Departure of the spy. The Confederate camp. Capt. St. Clair's soliloquy. Plotting. Pete. The old Negro is used rather roughly. Father and son. The man who stutters so badly. The discovery. A spy. Do your worst, you cowardly traitor. Pete makes himself useful. No chance of life. Thrilling tableau and capture of St. Clair. Escape of St. Clair. The pursuit. Generals McPherson and Sherman. News from the front, McPherson preparing for battle. Firing on the left. I must at once ascertain the cause. The Rebel squad. McPherson's danger. "Halt and surrender." The fatal shot. "It is General McPherson; you have killed the best man in the Union Army."

ACT III.

Return of the spy. Sherman bears of the death of his friend. The enemy's lines in motion. The long roll and general engagement.

ACT IV.

Battlefield by night. "Water! I am dying for want of water." Little Willie. The traitor forgiven. Edwin and Willie are made prisoners. The discovery, and renewal of the oath of vengeance.

ACT V.

Andersonville with all its horrors. Hope of being exchanged. The last crust of bread. St. Clair informs Edwin of the arrival of his wife. Fears of infamy, and prayers to God for reason to know her. The minnie. "Oh brother, don't you know me?" "I am your brother Willie." Maud arrives. Terror on beholding her husband. "He must know me." The picture. The recognition of the picture, and "you are—no I can not be wrong, you are Maud, my wife, thank God." Villainy of St. Clair. The cry for bread. Bravery of Willie. The fatal shot, and death of the brave boy. Madness. The curse. "Boys, let us pray that this may soon end." The rescue.

ACT VI.

News of the surrender of Lee. The new love. The vacant chair. Happiness of Pete. Return of the boys, and joyful meeting of loved ones.

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